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28 FEB 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Chief, DPD  
SUBJECT: Project OXCART Concept of Operations  
FY-63 - FY-64

Attached is the FY-63 - FY-64 Concept of Operations for  
Project OXCART.

SIGNED

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Chief, Special Projects Branch, DPD

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PROJECT OXCART FORECAST OF OPERATIONAL

ACTIVITIES FOR FY-1963 TO FY-1964

1. MISSION:

- a. To develop, attain, and maintain an operational capability which will permit immediate and successful completion of aerial reconnaissance missions of denied areas at the earliest possible date.
- b. To conduct covert aerial reconnaissance missions of denied areas, as directed by Project Headquarters, which will provide high resolution photographic [redacted] intelligence.

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2. DEFINITIONS:

a. Pre-Operational Period (FY-1963)

The period preceding operational readiness to accomplish the primary mission.

b. Operational Period (FY 1964)

The period beginning once an acceptable operational capability to perform the primary mission has been established.

3. TASKS AND OBJECTIVES:

a. Pre-Operational Period (FY-1963)

During this period the primary emphasis will be directed toward the accomplishment of the following major tasks:

- (1) The development and procurement of new equipment and systems which will comprise the A-12 reconnaissance [redacted] [redacted] systems and supporting equipment and systems.

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(2) The construction and readying of [redacted] and supporting facilities preparatory to A-12 flying operations.

(3) The logistical build-up required to support the Pre-Operational Period and the continued build-up in logistical capability to support the Operational Period.

(4) The planning, programming and coordination required to be ready to implement the Operational Period programs to include environmental studies.

(5) The installation of specialized communications facilities will be required for the coordination and control of tactical and support aircraft movements. Communications tie in with SAC, NORAD and FAA will be required.

(6) The flight testing of the A-12 system and related systems to a degree of reliability which will permit the commencement of flying training.

(7) The training and familiarization of personnel with new systems and equipment preparatory to the commencement of A-12 operational missions.

(8) The training of operational pilots and Detachment personnel and the continued testing of the A-12 reconnaissance weapons system to an operational readiness status.

(9) The development and feasibility testing of air tactics and operational employment and control procedures.

b. Operational Period (FY 1964)

During this period the following major tasks will be accomplished:

(1) The execution of aerial reconnaissance missions of denied areas as directed.

(2) The continued testing of equipment, systems, and procedures in order to improve the operational capability and reliability.

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(3) The continued proficiency training of operational pilots and Detachment personnel.

4. AIRCRAFT UTILIZATION AND CONTROL:

a. A-12 Aircraft:

(1) A-12 aircraft which are instrumented as flight test beds will be under the control of the [redacted] until their requirement as instrumented test beds no longer exists. At such time, to be determined by Project Headquarters these aircraft will be transferred to the operational control of the Detachment Commander to be utilized as directed.

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(2) Other A-12 aircraft will be under the control of the [redacted] until their airworthiness has been proven, at which time they will be released to the operational control of the Detachment Commander for use in the flying training program. Aircraft acceptance procedures will be established by Project Headquarters.

(3) A-12 aircraft which are engaged in directed missions will be under the operational control of Project Headquarters, however, authority to cancel Headquarters-directed flights for reasons of terminal weather or other factors involving safety of flight is vested in the Detachment Commander.

(4) See attachment 1 for A-12 Flying Hour Projection.

b. F-101 Aircraft:

These aircraft will be used for training and proficiency flying of the Detachment operational pilots and supervisory personnel under the operational control of the Detachment Commander. Two F-101 aircraft are programmed for assignment on 15 April 1962. Two additional F-101 aircraft on 1 December 1962. Thirty (30) flying hours/aircraft/month will be required.

c. T-33 and U-3A Aircraft:

These aircraft will be under the operational control of the Detachment Commander to be used as required for the following:

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- (1) Training and proficiency flights for Detachment rated personnel.
- (2) The accomplishment of minimum annual flying requirements as prescribed in AFR 60-3.
- (3) Airlift, liaison, and other flying required to support the mission.
- (4) Thirty (30) flying hours/aircraft/month will be required.

5. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

a. Pre-Operational Period (FY 1963):

(1) Prior to the availability of the first A-12 aircraft for flying training, the Detachment operational pilots must maintain a high degree of flying proficiency using the assigned F-101 aircraft. Where feasible, simulated A-12 flying techniques should be included in the F-101 training program.

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(2) Once the airworthiness of the A-12 aircraft has been established by the [redacted] the initial checkout of operational pilots should get under way. Initial checkout will be conducted using Lockheed Flight Test pilots. Selected Detachment operational pilots will be identified as A-12 instructor pilots, who, when proficient, will continue the checkout of the remaining assigned operational pilots. As required, the F-101 aircraft will be used to augment the A-12 flying training program.

(3) The A-12 flying training program must provide for attaining a high degree of proficiency and reliability in all operational phases of the primary mission profile. This will include day and night transition flying, instrument flying, aerial refueling, navigation, photographic flight line flying, systems operations, and emergency procedures. Air tactics must be developed and procedures for mission implementation and control established and exercised.

(4) The flying training and flight test programs should be integrated to the fullest possible extent so that the maximum utilization of flying hours available is realized. The immediate

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objective will be to train two pilots to operational readiness at the earliest possible date whereby operational missions can be executed once the reconnaissance weapons system has demonstrated an acceptable level of capability and reliability.

**b. Operational Period (FY 1964):**

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(1) Operational missions will be executed as directed by Project Headquarters. Necessary implementation and control procedures will be established by Project Headquarters in conjunction with Detachment personnel. Operational missions will be flown [redacted] with range extension accomplished through aerial refuelings by KC-135 aircraft operating from forward staging bases.

(2) The feasibility of employing the A-12 aircraft from forward bases will receive continuous review by the Detachment Commander and Project Headquarters. Both pre-strike and post-strike staging operations will be considered.

**6. SURVIVABILITY STUDIES:**

a. The probability of detection and intercept of the A-12 vehicle during operational missions must be thoroughly studied and evaluated. Both passive and active detection and tracking capabilities including the sonic boom, must be considered. Intercept capabilities of the manned fighter, SAM, and infra-red homing devices must be assessed.

b. ATIC, OSI and other technical assessment centers should be enrolled to conduct these studies on a continuing basis. Procedures must be established for the prompt dissemination of survivability estimates to Project Headquarters.

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